

REMARKS

The drawings have been objected to under 27 CFR 1.83(a) on the grounds that they do not show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In this regard, the objectionable language has been removed from the claims or the claims have been canceled. Fig. 1 has been designated with the legend "Prior Art" as requested by the Examiner.

The specification has been amended to correct the informalities raised by the Examiner in Paragraph 3 of the Office Action.

Claims 2 and 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112. These claims have been canceled.

The claims have also been amended to overcome the objections raised in Paragraph 8 of the Office Action.

As concerns the merits of the case, claim 1 has been amended to specifically call for a counter-ring that is integral with the end cap of the housing and a sliding ring that has a groove on its bearing surface that cooperates with the counter-ring.

New claims 7 and 8 specifically call for the counter-ring to be formed from a ceramic material and, more specifically, SiC.

In that none of the cited references show or suggest a counter-ring integrally formed with the end cap and a sliding ring groove that cooperates with the counter-ring, it is earnestly believed that claim 1 as amended clearly distinguishes the invention from the prior art.